

unless directed by expert knowledge. Earlier in the afternoon, during a debate on lead poisoning in the potteries, I listened with great pleasure to an address by a Mr. Reed, who said that he had worked in the potteries for thirty years and spoke as a workman, although now holding the position of manager. His speech was clear, vigorous, and convincing, having that ring of absolute truth which testimony from experience somehow always conveys, even if one is unable to test the truth from personal knowledge. Later, in the debate on factory legislation, another speaker, who described herself as a working woman gave a short but excellent address, also based on personal experience, which was well worth listening to. I refer to these in illustration: "This I know," "This I have done." How different from "I am told," "It is reported," etc. To a nurse who has been taught as a first principle to "state facts, not opinions," the former carry additional weight. Let us have facts, not opinions, in approaching reforms, or opinions based on facts, derived as far as possible from personal experience and observation. To the last named speaker, therefore, also to Mrs. King Roberts and Mr. Reed, I unhesitatingly accord first places in that afternoon's conference, even though others might excel them oratorically.

The fact that Nursing has been discussed at a Conference of Liberal Women is in itself a great gain, as efficient nursing is a matter of importance to every member of the community. First of all, women must understand that nursing is not a trade, but a highly skilled profession, and must be legislated for as such. We own that we have been disappointed that the patriotism of the women of England has not so far shown practical results. Not one national association of women (with the exception of the Matrons' Council) has taken up the question of the present disorganization in the Army Nursing Department, inquired into it, or made any suggestions for its reform. The apathy on this woman's question, when it is realised how terrible is the loss and suffering entailed by the present inadequate and chaotic arrangements, is sad indeed. Our readers will be interested to know that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Miss Isla Stewart received courteous invitations to speak on Mrs. Charles McLaren's resolution at Birmingham, but were unable to avail themselves of the opportunity.

"To give what none can measure, none can weigh,
Simply to go where duty points the way.
Faith, honor, duty—duty calmly done,
That shouts no self-praise o'er a victory won;
One bugle note their battle call,
One single watchword, DUTY—that is all."

—WILL MITCHELL.

Vanishing Landmarks.

SHADES OF GAMP.

"The old order changeth, giving place to new," nor can one entirely regret it in the present instance, seeing that the new Strand to Holborn thoroughfare, now being made by the London County Council, will occasion the demolition of undesirable rookeries, and insanitary streets, while it provides us with a much needed roadway. At the same time, most improvements give occasion for some regret, and though modern nurses have little in common with their predecessor, Mrs. Gamp (a Bart's nurse, by the way), they will regret that a street which is fast disappearing is Kingsgate Street, High Holborn, where their prototype lodged, over the shop of the bird fancier, who was also a barber.

Standing in Kingsgate Street, in front of this little shop, the surroundings appears so similar to those of the time when Charles Dickens wrote "Martin Chuzzlewit," that it is easy to imagine a few pebbles thrown at the window of the "first floor front" would still arouse Mrs. Gamp, that her portly form, with a face suited to the occasion, would still appear at the window, and she would intimate that she would be "down directly." The present occupant of the shop in this historic house is a barber, as in her day. The tri-coloured pole still indicates his business, but the mutton pie shop next door but one has disappeared, nor is the cat's-meat shop to be found over the way. The outside of the house is not, however, altogether satisfying. One wants to see the room in which Mrs. Gamp actually lived. One has, of course, no right to invade a stranger's house, but the working classes are proverbially courteous, so having discovered that Mrs. Howard now occupies Mrs. Gamp's former lodging, I call upon her, and explain that being a trained nurse I am anxious to see this historic spot before it is demolished. With ready kindness she does the honours of the room, which, some twelve feet square perhaps, is evidently living and sleeping room in one for the family, and explains that some wooden supports on one side of the room have been put up since Mrs. Gamp's day, as the house was becoming unsafe otherwise it is unchanged. One could picture the old lady in her "rusty black gown, rather the worse for snuff," moving about on household cares intent; while the bottle on the manleshelf afforded refreshment when she was "so disposed," and unused suits of clothes depended from the four post bedstead, so that, at first sight, it appeared that Mrs. Gamp's double had hanged herself.

Having saturated myself with memories of historic Kingsgate Street, I bethink myself of the "Bull," in Holborn, where, it will be remembered

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)